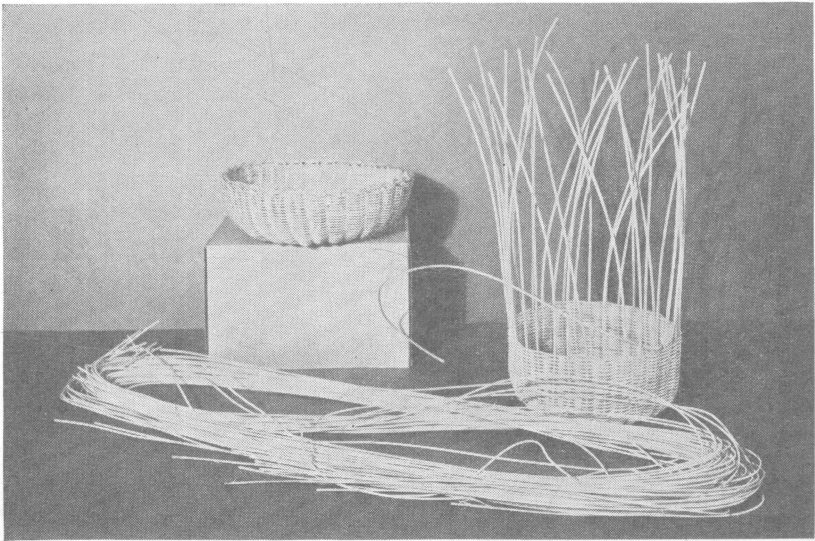


BASKETRY



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BASKETRY



MUCH JOY and satisfaction may come from making useful and attractive objects. The amateur who makes an object for the first time usually finds that the results will be most satisfactory if he follows directions carefully. However, through practice, skill is developed in the handling of materials and in the constructive processes. The person making his first basket finds interest in working with materials which are new to him even though they may have grown or been prepared in his community. Basket making is a means by which ideas about design and color may be expressed. A plan for a beautifully shaped basket may by a little handiwork

become a reality at little cost. Original designs may be woven into a choice article. The worker who observes baskets and studies them may become more conscious of the fact that the beauty of baskets depends upon their shapes, sizes, designs of weaving, as well as choices of colors.

There are many uses for baskets in the home. Large, strong baskets are used for gathering eggs, fruits, and vegetables. Fire-side baskets made to hold firewood are useful as well as decorative. Finely woven, small and medium sized articles include:

serving trays, flower pot holders, sewing baskets, fruit bowls, small waste paper baskets, and school lunch baskets. Round and oval shaped mats are used under hot dishes, flower pots, and lamps.

Factors contributing to a beautiful basket are: appropriate kind and size of material, interesting and well proportioned shape, wise use of color, and careful workmanship. Decisions as to the size and shape of basket to be made depend upon its function, the amount of time available for making it, and the cost involved. Simplicity of design is usually more beautiful than heavy, elaborate decoration and unwieldy handles.



Fig. 1.—Baskets are useful as well as decorative.

The general appearance of a woven article is affected by its material, weave, border, handle, cover, and surface finish. There are many materials used for basketry. Different materials are available in various localities. The more common materials are reed, pine needles, raffia, split roots and barks, willow, corn husks, and grasses. Most of these materials can be obtained from wholesale houses which handle handicraft supplies. A few of the materials may be gathered from the local countryside.

This bulletin describes some fundamental principles and processes involved in making articles of reed, corn husk, raffia, and some modifications of reed. Reed baskets may be made easily, quickly, and with little practice. Corn husks are limited in their use, but are easily handled by the inexperienced worker. Raffia is a fine weaving material, therefore it requires greater skill, a longer amount of time, and more care to make articles from raffia than from the other materials.

Directions for making some small articles of each kind of material are given in the hope that by making them the worker will develop some skill and sufficient interest to plan and make other baskets. With a little experience, original designs may be created. Planning original designs may develop into an enjoyable hobby and be interesting to the worker.



REED



REED is manufactured from rattan, which grows best in the East Indian Islands. Round reed is sold in hanks of about 1 pound, which contain many separate lengths or strands of the fiber. It varies in size from numbers 00 to 17. Size 00, the finest reed, is used for making centers, finishing handles, and for making very small baskets. Sizes 1 to 5 are best for small and medium sized baskets and trays. Sizes 6 to 10 are suitable for handles and base spokes for large baskets.

The ribs or foundation of a basket are called spokes, and the strand of reed used for weaving or interlacing is called a weaver. Spokes should be cut from reed one or two sizes coarser than that used for weavers. A difference of one size is sufficient for small articles.

PREPARATION OF REED

Reed comes in long skeins and should be drawn out from the loop end as needed to prevent its becoming tangled and broken. Each strand of reed should be soaked before using, to make it pliable and to prevent breaking. Cut and soak the required number of spokes for the basket being made. Coil the weavers so that they fit into the pan of water, and soak them just before using. A mere dipping in water is enough for sizes 00 and 0 reed; sizes 1 to 3 require about 10 minutes, and sizes 4 to 6 reed need to be soaked 20 to 30 minutes. Spokes need to be soaked only 5 to 15 minutes, depending upon their size.

Use cool water for soaking reed and remove it when pliable, as too long soaking makes reed brittle. If it dries out the reed may be soaked again.

EQUIPMENT NEEDED FOR REED BASKETRY

The minimum of tools needed for reed basketry are: a tub or large pan for soaking reed, heavy shears, a sharp knife, an awl or ice pick, and a rule or tape line. Pliers are helpful, but may be omitted.

COLOR AND SURFACE FINISHES

Reed comes in natural color. It may be colored in one of several different ways. The separate strands can be dyed before they are woven, or an article may be colored after it is made. Colored strands of reed make possible the combination of colors for weaving an article. The spokes may be of one color and the weavers of another. Weavers of two or three different colors are sometimes used with natural colored spokes. A completed article can be dyed or finished with a wood stain, shellac, or enamel. Before applying a surface finish, singe the article over a low flame to remove hair-like fibers.

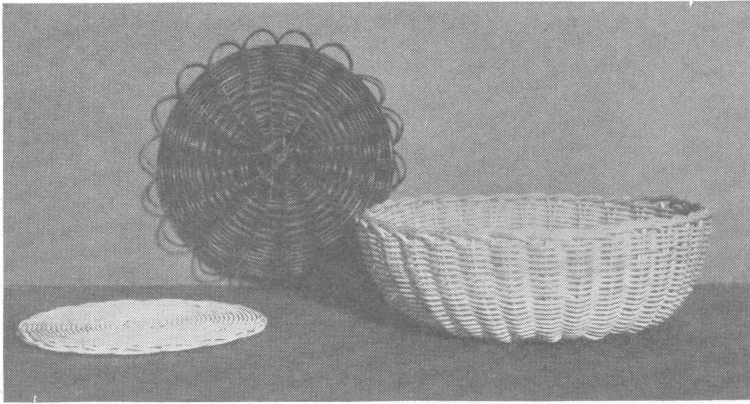


Fig. 2.—Mats and a basket of reed.

To dye strands of reed, roll them up separately, soak a few minutes in water, then place them in a concentrated solution of a dye such as is used for textiles. Soak fine reed in the dye, but allow coarse reed to boil. Remove reed when the desired color is obtained. If an article is to be dyed one color it may be immersed in the dye bath after it is completed.

Desirable effects are obtained by staining reed articles with a wood stain in natural wood colors or pastel tints. Thin the stain if necessary according to the type of stain used, and apply it with a small brush. Give the article as many coats as necessary to cover well. When dry, the article may be rubbed with a little furniture wax to enhance its beauty and to protect the finish, or it may be shellacked.

Shellac may be applied in the same manner as stain to give color and to protect the wood. The shellac should be renewed every year or two.

For bright or delicate colors, paint reed articles with oil paint or enamel. Paint or enamel gives a hard surface and covers the texture of the reed.

GENERAL RULES FOR MAKING WOVEN BASES

Spokes form the framework of a basket and must be stronger than the weavers. The number of spokes used depends upon the size and design of the article and the size of the reed. The more spokes used the closer will be the weave. Six or eight spokes are used for beginning most small and medium sized articles. Large, strong articles require more spokes.

To estimate the length of spokes necessary for a small or medium-sized article, decide upon the diameter of the bottom, height of the sides, and kind of border to be used. The spokes should be long enough to extend across the bottom and up both sides. Allow 3 inches at each end of each spoke for a simple border, and more for an elaborate finish. (See "Borders," pages 9 and 10).

If an article is large and the base spokes too stiff to bend upward to form sides, the spokes may be cut off at the edge of the base. Spokes of finer reed are then added to form the sides.

All spokes should radiate gradually from the center and be an equal distance from each other.

A base should be dome shaped so that it rests on its outer edge. As it is woven draw each row of weaving slightly tighter so as to produce the dome shape.

The weaving should be smooth, even, and firm. As a weaver is brought around each spoke curve it downward and toward the center so that it curves around the spoke, and does not lie flat. Push each new row of weaving down close to the preceding row.

HOW TO ADD SPOKES

As a base widens and the spokes become farther apart it is necessary to insert additional spokes. Base spokes of heavy reed should be replaced by finer reed for side spokes.

For a small article insert a new spoke on one side of every second spoke. Omit one spoke when an uneven number of spokes is necessary for the kind of weave used.

When making a large article with heavy spokes, cut off the base spokes at the edge of the base. Insert a new spoke of finer reed on each side of each of the original spokes. Omit one spoke if an uneven number is needed. Insert spokes before the base is entirely woven to fasten them securely. Finish weaving the base and then turn up the new spokes to form the sides of the basket.

An awl or ice pick is useful in loosening the weaving so that the spokes can be pushed in easily. Large size reed may be sharpened on the end which is to be inserted. Push all added spokes toward the center as far as possible, to make them firm.

After adding spokes, separate them evenly and continue with the weaving. A change in the type of weave used will tend to make the addition of spokes less noticeable.

ROUND BASES

Base with Simple Weave.—Cut the number of spokes needed for the base or for the entire article. Cut an additional spoke half the length of these

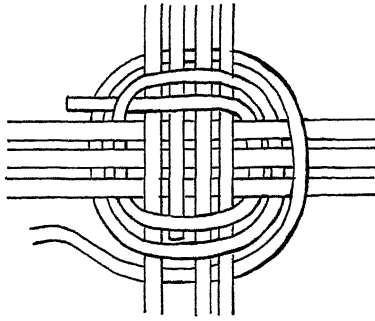


Fig. 3.—Beginning a round base.

spokes. Divide the whole spokes into two equal groups. Place one group at right angles over the other, crossing them at their centers. Insert the half spoke in one of the groups so that one end comes just past the center. Hold the work firmly in the left hand until the center is woven securely. The half spoke gives an odd number of spokes, which is necessary for weaving with a single weaver.

To start weaving place a fine weaver over one group of spokes so that the end of the weaver points toward the left, and is long enough to fasten in the weaving later. Weaving clockwise, pass the weaver under the second group of spokes, over the third, and under the fourth group. Weave a second row in the same manner. To reverse the order in the third row, pass the weaver under instead of over the first group, then over the second group, and continue until two rows are woven. The weaver passes over and under each group of spokes twice and makes four rows of weaving in all (see Fig. 2).

Separate the spokes and begin the Simple Weave (see p. 8).

Base with Japanese Weave.—Soak eight spokes and divide them into two equal groups. Cross the groups at right angles, holding them in place at the center with the left hand. Start weaving by placing a weaver over one group of four spokes, allowing an end long enough to fasten later. Working clockwise, pass the weaver under the next group, over the third group of spokes, and so on until three rows are woven. Then separate the spokes evenly. Pass the weaver over two spokes and under one spoke, repeating until the base is completed (see Japanese Weave, p. 8).

OVAL BASES

Decide upon the length and width for an oval shaped base. Cut four spokes the length of the base. Cut enough spokes the width of the base so that they may be placed $\frac{3}{4}$ inch apart at right angles to the lengthwise spokes. Allow two spokes for each end (see Fig. 4), so that the distance between the spokes at the ends of the base will not be too great when separated for weaving.

Slit the short spokes lengthwise through the center for a distance of about an inch. Insert the long spokes through the slits and adjust the short spokes (see Fig. 4). The short spoke at each end is placed about half its length from the end of the long spokes.

The spokes should be securely fastened before the weaving is begun. Place a fine weaver, end up, under the long spokes and parallel to the two left hand short spokes. Wrap weaver once around long spokes to fasten its

end. Bring the weaver up over the two short end spokes, and down under the long spokes. Wrap the weaver around the long spokes several times between the two end spokes and the next short spoke. Carry weaver up over the short spoke, and repeat until the two short spokes at the right hand end are crossed by the weaver (see Fig. 4).

Separate the end spokes and start weaving. Weave clockwise. Since there are an even number of spokes, the base is woven with two weavers instead of one. Use either the Pairing Weave or Simple Weave made with two weavers (see p. 8).

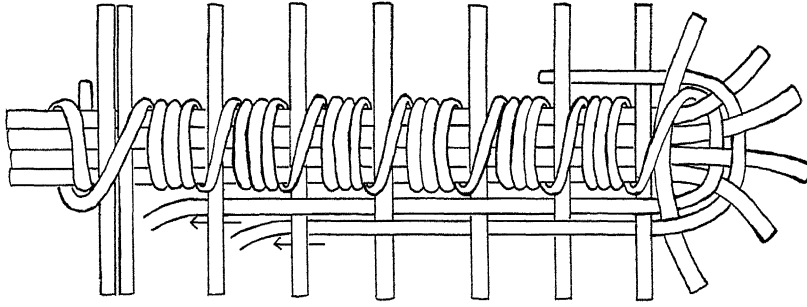


Fig. 4.—Beginning an oval base.

WOOD BASES

Wood bases are desirable for making serving trays, firewood baskets, and others requiring a strong, flat bottom. They are usually made of three-ply veneer board with holes bored about $\frac{1}{4}$ inch from the edge. Wood bases may be bought already cut and the holes bored by the worker. The diameter of the holes should be a little greater than the diameter of the reed used.

If an even number of spokes is used for the sides, cut them twice as long as the actual height of the article, including an allowance on each end of the spoke for a border. After soaking the spokes, bend each one double and insert the ends through adjacent holes in the base. This forms loops on the underside of the base for it to rest upon.

If an uneven number of spokes is used for the sides, cut them the actual height of the article, including an allowance for the border and an additional $1\frac{1}{2}$ inches. Insert a spoke in each hole, extending it $1\frac{1}{2}$ inches below the base. To finish these short ends on the underside of the base pass each spoke end in front of the one to its right, and point the end toward the center of the base. Bend the last end to be fastened under the loop made by the first spoke end. Start weaving the sides with Simple Weave (see p. 8).

FUNDAMENTAL WEAVES

There are many types of weaves used in reed basketry. They vary in appearance according to the number of strands of reed necessary to make them, and according to the number of spokes they pass over and under in

producing the weave. Some weaves can be made only with an even number of spokes, while other weaves require an uneven number. An entire article may be made of one weave, or a combination of two or three weaves may be used. Some of the simple fundamental weaves are described here.

Simple or Over-and-Under Weave.—When there is an uneven number of spokes, a weaver is passed over a spoke, under the next spoke, over the third, under the fourth spoke, and so on, around and around the article (see Fig. 5 A).

If there is an even number of spokes, the same effect is produced by using two weavers alternately (see Fig. 5 B). Fasten the two weavers beside adjacent spokes. Weave around the article once with one weaver, then the other. The second weaver passes under the spokes that the first went over, and over the spokes that the first went under.

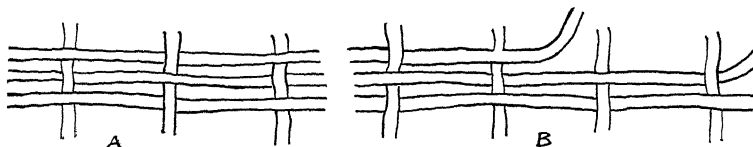


Fig. 5.—Simple weave: A. With uneven number of spokes; B. With even number of spokes.

Double Weave.—This weave is the same as Simple Weave (see Fig. 5) except that two weavers are used as one.

The use of double spokes makes this weave more attractive. Insert a new spoke beside each of the original spokes. Without separating the spokes, weave over and under each pair as though it was one spoke.

Japanese Weave.—The number of spokes should not be divisible by three for this weave. Pass a weaver over two spokes, under the third, over the fourth and fifth, and under the sixth. Continue weaving around and around the article in this manner. This weave gives a diagonal appearance, the fourth row of weaving being the same as the first.

Pairing Weave.—This weave may be used with either an odd or even number of spokes. Fold a weaver in the middle and slip it over a spoke. Pass the weaver on the left over the right hand weaver. Then pass the original left hand weaver behind the next spoke and out between it and the third spoke. The original right hand weaver now becomes the left, and in a like manner passes over the other weaver, behind the third spoke and out. Thus the left hand weaver always crosses the right weaver between two spokes.

HOW TO FORM SIDES OF BASKET

When a base is of desired diameter the spokes are turned up to form the sides. Pliers may be used to pinch the spokes upward. Or the base may be weighted down and the spokes pressed upward with the fingers and tied up until they become dry. Continue with the weaving to form the sides.

The sides may be made to slant outward by gradually shaping the spokes in that direction and loosening the tension on the weaver. To make an outward curve, slant the sides outward the desired distance then draw the weaving tighter, pulling the spokes gradually toward the center of the article to complete the curve.

HOW TO END AND START WEAVERS

Having woven the length of a weaver, insert its end into the weaving on the left side of a spoke. Start a new weaver by inserting its end on the right hand side of the spoke to the left of the former spoke (see Fig. 6). Weavers may also be spliced by crossing the ends of the weavers behind a spoke.

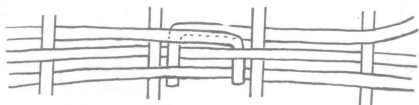


Fig. 6.—Method of ending and starting weavers.

CLOSED BORDERS

A basket should be finished with a border best suited to its design and texture. Borders are made with the ends of the spokes after the sides of an article have been woven. When planning the length of spokes needed for an article, allow 3 to 6 inches extra for a closed border. The length needed depends upon the kind of border used and the distance between the spokes at the top of the article. If the end of spokes are too long after the border is made, some of the length should be cut off before inserting the end into the weaving. Soak the spoke ends until pliable before beginning a border. Some suggestions for closed borders follow.

Finishing Border or "Over One and In."—This border may be used to complete small articles or to finish the inside edge of complicated borders.

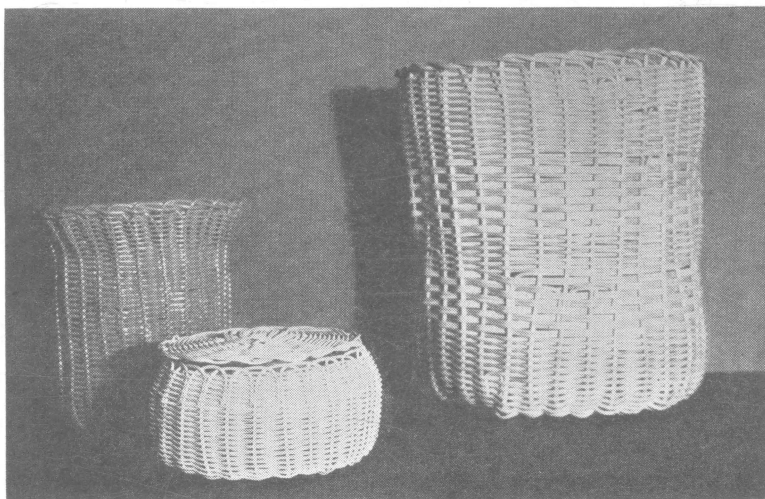


Fig. 7.—Baskets made with simple weave and closed borders.

Start with any spoke end. Pass it in front of the next spoke to its right. Insert the end in the weaving at the left of the next spoke. Working toward the right, finish each spoke in a like manner. Press each loop close to the edge of the basket.

"Under a Spoke, Over a Spoke, and In" Border.—This border is suitable for small and medium sized articles. Allow 3 to 5 inches on the length of spokes for this border.

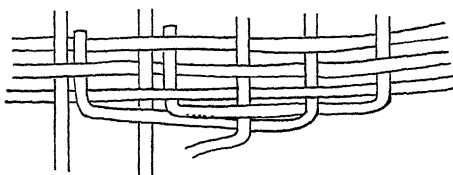


Fig 8—Method of making "Under One, Over One and In" border.

Starting with any spoke end, pass it behind the spoke at its right, over the second spoke, and insert its end into the weaving beside the third spoke (see Fig. 8). Work toward the right, fastening each spoke in its turn. The last spoke is passed through the loop made by bending down the first spoke.

"Under One, Over One, Under One, and In" Border.—As this is quite a heavy border it is best suited to medium sized articles. Allow 5 or 6 inches of spoke ends for this border. Pass each spoke from left to right under the first spoke, over the next, under the third, and insert its end into the weaving beside the fourth spoke.

"Under One, Over Two, and In" Border.—This border is most suitable for large, strong articles. Allow 6 to 8 inches of spoke ends for making this border. Pass each spoke in succession under the one at the right, and over the next two spokes. Allow the end to point toward the inside of the article. When dry trim spoke ends.

OPEN BORDERS

Open borders are most suitable for mats, vases, cake baskets, and flower-pot holders. When planning the length of spokes for an article, allow 5 to 8 inches extra for an open border. Before beginning a border trim all spokes to the length needed. Allow a sufficiently long end to be securely fastened into the weaving. Soak spokes well before making border. Start with any spoke and work clockwise until all spokes are laid. The following are two methods for making open borders.

1. Start with any spoke. Bend it toward the right. Pass it behind the next spoke and insert its end into the weaving at the right of the same spoke (see Fig. 2).
2. Working from left to right, bend any spoke. Pass it behind the first and second spokes on the right. Insert its end into the weaving at the right of the second spoke. Continue in this manner until all the spokes are fastened.

HANDLES

The height and curve of a handle should be in pleasing proportion to the size and shape of the basket. They should be strong enough for use, without looking bulky and out of proportion to the size of the article. Unnecessary and elaborate handles detract from the appearance of a basket.

Twisted Ring Handle.—This handle may be used on basket covers or may be attached to opposite sides of the basket proper (see the handle on the sewing basket in Fig. 9). With a short strand of reed form a ring and twist the end of the reed around the ring. Twist the reed around the ring a second time so that the reed falls into the grooves made by the first twist. Attach the ring to the basket with two strands of reed twisted together. Securely fasten the ends in the weaving.

Twisted Handles.—This is a high handle looped over the basket and fastened at opposite sides. Cut a reed three times the length of handle desired, plus 4 inches for fastenings. Draw one-third the length of reed through the weaving just below the border. Twist the long and short ends of reed together to form the handle. At the opposite side fasten the short end of reed in the weaving, inserting it from the outside of the basket. Draw the remaining reed toward the inside of the basket and pass the reed straight through the weaving to the outside of the basket. Twist the reed back over the handle so that the reed falls in the grooves made by the first twist. Fasten end of reed in the weaving. Shorter handles for basket covers are made in like manner.

Rope Handles.—Cut a heavy reed a suitable length for a high handle. Its length depends upon the size and shape of the article. Insert the ends of the heavy piece of reed well into the weaving at opposite sides of the basket. Start a fine reed on one side and wind it around the handle. At the opposite side insert the weaver into the weaving from the outside of the basket, pulling it through the weaving to the inside of the basket. Wrap the weaver back over the handle so that each new coil falls below the first. When back to the original side insert the weaver through the weaving and make a third coil over the handle. Continue until the entire handle is covered. Wrap a short reed around the handle five or six times close to the top of the basket to securely fasten the twists.

Wrapped Handles.—Cut a length of No. 6 round reed or four lengths of No. 4 round reed, the number of inches required for the handle, plus enough for fastening each end (see wrapped handle in Fig. 9). Sharpen the reed at each end and insert it into the weaving on opposite sides of basket. Fasten the heavy reed by passing a fine weaver through the weaving and over the sharpened ends in such a way that the weaver forms a cross on the outside of the basket. After securing this end of the reed wrap the heavy reed handle at regular intervals with the fine weaver, and fasten handle securely at the opposite side with the weaver.

To make the fine reed form crosses over the handle, wrap the weaver around the handle to the opposite side of the basket, then back over the handle and securely fasten the weaver at the opposite side. An interesting handle is made by using two reeds for the handle, fastening them together with crosses of the reed as described above.

Raised Handles.—When the sides of a basket are woven about the desired height, cut two cardboard forms the size and shape desired for the openwork at the handle. On opposite sides of the basket insert the cardboard forms. Insert each cardboard by passing it in and out among the spokes.

Continue weaving from one to five rows, passing the weaver over the top of the cardboard forms. Remove the cardboard forms. The rows of weaving remain raised where the cardboard had been and form the handles. Finish the edge of the basket with a closed border, running the ends of the spokes to the bottom of the open work to give the effect of double spokes (see Fig. 9).

BASKET COVERS

Covers for baskets should be in keeping with the design, size, and texture of the basket itself. The spokes and weavers should be the same size as those used for the sides of the basket. When the cover is almost woven, make a few inches of the border to determine whether more or less weaving is necessary to make the cover large enough for the basket.

Flat Cover.—Make a cover the same as the base of the basket. Finish it with a closed border. The border around the cover should fit into the border of the basket. Soak the cover and weight it down to dry flat before adding a handle to the cover (see the covered basket in Fig. 9).

Cover with Turned Down Edge.—Weave a cover large enough to cover the top of the basket completely. Soak the spokes well, tie the cover on the basket, and bend the spokes of the cover down over the sides of the basket. Weave the sides of the cover and finish with a closed border. The depth of the sides of the cover depends upon the size and shape of the basket.

BASKETS TO MAKE OF REED

Making one or more articles of reed will give enough practice that others may be easily, quickly and skillfully made. With a little experience, original designs can be worked out. The following are directions for making some attractive reed articles.

Sandwich or Fruit Basket

Material.—8 spokes No. 4 reed, 25 inches long.
1 spoke No. 4 reed, 13 inches long.
16 spokes No. 4 reed, 10 inches long.
Weavers No. 2 reed, 12 strands.
Handle, No. 6 reed, 20 inches long.

Method.—Divide the eight spokes into two groups of four each. Insert the one extra spoke in one of the groups. Wrap the groups of spokes (see Round Bases, p. 6). Separate the spokes and begin the Simple Weave (see p. 8). When the base measures 5 inches in diameter, add the 16 spokes (see p. 5). Continue with ten rows of "Double Over and Under" Weave. Make 7 rows of Simple Weave, and turn up the sides. Continue with 18 rows of Simple Weave. Make "Under One, Over One, Under One, and In" border (see p. 10). Insert loop handle in opposite sides, secure and wrap it (see raised handle in Fig. 9 and "Wrapped Handles," p. 11).

The same basket may be made with raised handles instead of with a loop handle (see p. 11 and Fig. 9). After turning up the sides of the basket, weave 7 rows, insert cardboard forms for the handles, and continue, weaving over them with 5 rows of Simple Weave. Make a closed border.

Oval Shopping Basket

Material — 4 spokes No. 6 reed, $12\frac{1}{2}$ inches long.

10 spokes No. 6 reed, $5\frac{1}{2}$ inches long.

36 spokes No. 4 reed, 17 inches long.

Weavers No. 3 and 4, 15 strands round reed and 8 strands flat reed.

Handles—No. 6 reed, 4 strands, 30 inches long.

Small amount of No. 2 reed to fasten handles.

Method — Using the 4 long spokes and 10 short ones, make an oval base (see p. 6). Weave with No. 3 reed until the base is 2 inches wide. Continue weaving with No. 4 reed until all the base spokes are covered. Trim



Fig. 9.—Baskets with handles.

off ends of base spokes if uneven. Insert one of the 36 spokes of No. 4 reed beside each short base spoke, and one on each side of the end spokes. Weave one row of Pairing Weave.

Bend the spokes upward at right angles to the base. Continue weaving with Simple Weave, using two alternating weavers since there is an even number of spokes (see p. 8). When the sides are an inch high, cut and fasten ends of weavers. Start two strands of flat reed and make $1\frac{1}{2}$ inches of Simple Weave, using the weavers alternately. Continue in this manner until there are four sections of round reed and three of flat, making the basket $8\frac{1}{2}$ or 9 inches high.

Make an "Under One, Over Two, and In" border (see p. 10). Sharpen the ends of the four heavy reeds for the handle. Insert two of the reeds into the weaving on one side of the basket, and 3 inches from one end of the basket. Twist the two reeds together tightly. Bend the twisted handle

into a curved shape. Insert its loose end into the weaving on the same side of the basket and 3 inches from the other end of the basket. Make and insert another handle on the opposite side of the basket.

Then securely fasten and wrap the handles in the following manner. Cut a little slit lengthwise in each of the heavy reed handles close to the top of the basket. Put a strand of the No. 2 reed through the slits at one end of the basket. Fasten it securely to the handle and the basket. Twist the fine reed around the handle in the grooves made by the twisting of the large reeds. Pass the fine reed through the slits at the other end of the handle and fasten it securely. Reinforce the other handle likewise.

Sewing Basket

Material—*Basket*.—8 spokes No. 4 reed, 24 inches long.
1 spoke No. 4 reed, 12 inches long.
16 spokes No. 4 reed, 10 inches long.
Weavers—No. 2 reed, 12 strands.

Cover.—8 spokes No. 4 reed, 16 inches long.
1 spoke No. 4 reed, 8 inches long.
16 spokes No. 4 reed, 8 inches long.
Weavers—No. 2 reed, 5 strands.

Method — Make center of base and weave 11 rows of Simple Weave. Add the 16 spokes and weave 11 rows of Double Weave. Make 5 rows of Simple Weave and one row of Pairing Weave. Turn the spokes up at a right angle to the base and continue weaving until sides are $2\frac{3}{4}$ inches high. Finish with "Under One, Over One, Under One, and In" border (see p. 10). Make a flat cover same as base, and finish with the same border as the basket. Make a twisted ring handle and attach it to the center of the cover (see the covered basket in Fig. 9).

MODIFICATIONS OF ROUND REED BASKETRY

Flat reed is also used for basket making. It can be used in several different ways. An entire article may be made of flat reed, or the foundation spokes of flat reed and the weavers of round reed. A combination of flat and round reed is frequently used to produce a decorative weave (see directions for making an Oval Shopping Basket, p. 13).

There is on the market a fiber cord which is used for basket weaving. It resembles round reed, and comes in various sizes and colors. There are also flat and braided forms for decorative weaving. The method of weaving this material is the same as for round reed. Fiber cord does not require soaking.

“By a marvelous correspondence of function, the acquiring and the practice of a skill have always been both the condition for the survival of the race and its most enduring, most substantial, pleasure and joy.”

— DOROTHY CANFIELD FISHER

CORN HUSKS



SOME attractive and useful articles can be made of corn husks. They may be braided and the braids sewed together to form mats, rugs, and baskets. Trays and baskets are also made of rolled corn husks sewed together.

PREPARATION OF MATERIAL

Corn husks should be gathered after they have turned from green to tan. The husks of field corn are stronger and of a better color than those of sweet corn. Remove the coarse outer leaves and use the inner husks. Trim off the coarse ends with scissors and store the leaves in a dry place until ready to use them.

Corn husks can be dyed. Soak the leaves in warm water 15 minutes. Then boil them in a concentrated solution of a dye such as is used for fabrics. Use about twice the amount of dye per pound of husks as is recommended for a pound of cloth. Let the husks remain in the dye solution 12 hours after boiling. Rinse husks in cold water and dry them away from direct heat or sun. In the same dye bath, color the raffia or cord to be used for sewing the husks together, allowing the raffia or cord to remain in the dye just long enough to acquire the desired color.

EQUIPMENT

The only supplies needed for corn husk basketry are shears for cutting, raffia or heavy cord of matching color, and a tapestry or carpet needle.

BRAIDED CORN HUSKS

Round or oval shaped trays, mats, and baskets may be made of braided corn husks. Cut each leaf into strips the width desired for the finished braid. As an example, 1-inch strips will make a braid 1 inch in width and may be used for large articles; while strips $\frac{1}{2}$ inch or less are of suitable width for small articles.

Soak strips in warm water until pliable. Fold each of three strips double and tie them to a hook with a cord. Braid the three strands so that their folded edges are turned toward the center of the braid. Crease each strip flat as it is turned at the edge of the braid. To piece the husks, fold a new strip and place one end, folded, under the used one, so that the next turn of the used strip will cover the new end. The first turn of the new strip should conceal the end of the old one. Continue braiding until braid is long enough to make the desired article.

To make a round basket or mat, coil braid around and around, sewing edges of braid together with raffia or heavy cord of matching color. To make an oval article use several inches of one end of the braid for the center and coil the rest of the braid around it. Care should be taken to keep the work flat and neat. To finish a base or mat tuck the end of the braid under the preceding row and sew it securely. To start the sides of a basket or tray, sew one edge of the first row of braid to the top of the last row of the base.

ROLLED CORN HUSKS

Trim off all rough edges and soak husks in warm water. Place three leaves together and roll them tightly from one edge to the other. To start a round center, wrap raffia around the narrow end of a roll of husks. Coil

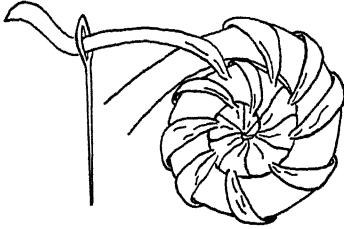


Fig. 10.—Beginning a center of rolled corn husks.

wrapped end into a circle. Begin sewing the first row by passing the sewing raffia around the roll of husk and through the edge of the coil. Each new stitch is taken between two stitches of the preceding row. Keep stitches evenly spaced.

To make an oval shape, bend coil several inches from the end. Sew the first row of the coil to it. Continue sewing the roll to each preceding row until the article is completed.

To piece rolls, slip the point of a new roll between the end of the used roll and the preceding row. To finish a base or mat, trim away inside leaves of roll, tapering the outer leaf to a point. Fasten end securely with the sewing raffia.

HANDLES

A knot-like handle for basket covers can be made of braided corn husks. Roll separately from end to end two or three short narrow braids. Place the rolls of braids on top of each other and sew them together securely. Sew the knot to the basket cover.

High, loop handles may be made of a single braid, or of two braids sewed together and attached at opposite sides of basket.

A loop of braid or roll may be attached to a mat or other article which is to be hung up.

Side handles of rolled corn husks wrapped with raffia may be used for trays and small baskets.

Wire handles wrapped with strips of corn husks or raffia make strong handles for larger baskets.

ARTICLES TO MAKE OF CORN HUSKS

Oval Mat of Braided Corn Husks

To make a mat 12 inches long, measure a 4-inch length on a $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch braid and bend the braid back, keeping it flat. Coil the braid around the 4-inch length of braid and sew their edges together, using overhanding stitches. Sew each new row of braid to the edge of the preceding row. Work from the under side. To make smaller mats, start with a shorter center. Use a longer center for larger mats.

Covered Basket of Braided Corn Husks

Sew braids together in a circular form, making a round base 8 inches in diameter. Sew first row of sides of basket to the top of the last row of braid around the base, thus forming a right angle. Make sides 4 inches in

height. Make a cover the same as the base, but enough smaller that it will just fit down into the basket. Sew a roll of corn husks around inside of the basket $\frac{1}{4}$ inch from the top for cover to rest upon. Make a knob-like handle of three rolls of narrow braid and attach to center of cover (see "Handles," p. 16).

Oval Tray of Rolled Corn Husks

Bend a roll of husk 4 inches from the end. Coil the roll around the 4-inch end and begin sewing (see p. 16). Sew each row to the preceding row. When base of tray measures 15 inches in length, add two rows of rolled husks at right angles to the base to form sides of tray. Attach at opposite ends of the tray a handle 6 inches in length, and wrapped at regular intervals with raffia. Space ends of each handle about 4 inches apart.

Small Basket of Rolled Husks

Make a round base 4 inches in diameter. Slant sides of basket outward so that the diameter at the top of the basket measures about 6 inches. The sides will be about $2\frac{1}{2}$ inches high. To form a loop handle make a roll of husks about 10 inches long. Attach it to one side of the basket with raffia or with sewing cord. Wrap the roll at regular intervals with the strand of raffia or cord. Fasten handle securely to opposite side of the basket.



R A F F I A

PREPARATION OF MATERIALS

RAFFIA comes in bundles with the large ends of it bound together. Soak the entire bundle of natural colored raffia several hours and lay it on a flat surface or a frame to dry slowly. This treatment helps to smooth out the raffia. As each strand of raffia is woven, draw it through a damp cloth to make the strand soft and flat.

Colored raffia does not need to be soaked, as it has been treated previously. It may be necessary to moisten each strand of colored raffia as it is used.

Reed is most commonly used as a foundation for articles made of raffia. Dip a long strand of reed in water, wind it into a 5- or 6-inch coil and tie it. Before using, soak a few inches of one end of the reed until pliable enough to make a center. It is unnecessary to moisten the reed again.

EQUIPMENT

The only tools needed for raffia weaving are: sharp shears, blunt tapestry needle No. 21, a tape measure, a pan of water, and a damp cloth.

THE COIL

The foundation around which raffia is wound is called a coil. It may be a split reed, round reed, or several strands of raffia grouped together. The latter makes a softer basket than a reed does.

The diameter which is desirable for a coil depends upon the size and design of the article to be made. Size No. 3 round reed is most commonly used for the coil of small and medium sized articles. Split reed No. 3 is sometimes used for making the center of raffia articles. Then to complete an article two split reeds are laid together to resemble a round reed. Numbers 4 and 6 round reed are used for weaving large articles of raffia.

Select long reeds so that few, if any, splicings will be necessary. To splice the coil, moisten and shave one side of both the used reed and the new one, beginning about $1\frac{1}{2}$ inches from the end. Place the flat surfaces together and wrap the joining tightly with a piece of raffia.

To complete an article, cut off the coil directly above the point where the reed was joined to the center, or where the side of the basket was begun. Shave the end of the coil for a distance of 2 inches and continue sewing until the end of the reed is covered.

A raffia coil is made of several strands of raffia, depending upon the size of coil desired. Additional strands must be added to the coil as it becomes thin to keep it of uniform size throughout. Insert the wide end of new strands close to the winding to hold them in place. To complete an article made with raffia cut the coil where it is to end. Cut out some of the strands, and cut the remaining ones on a slant so that the end will taper for a distance of 2 inches.

THE SEWING STRAND

A strand of raffia used for wrapping and binding together the rows of coil is called a sewing strand or thread. It should correspond in width to the size of the coil to be covered. Usually a strand of raffia is wide enough to be divided into two or three strands. If a strand is too wide at one end, split off a piece along one side.

The sewing strand should be threaded into the needle at the narrow end and the needle moved to the wider or stem end. Join the narrow end to the work. Move the needle along on the strand as the work progresses to keep the raffia from splitting.

Keep the thread flat by twisting the needle in the opposite direction every few stitches and by holding the strand, close to the work, with the left thumb and forefinger. It is best to use a strand not over 18 inches in length to prevent its splitting and curling.

To join a new strand allow several inches of the end of the new strand to lie along the coil at the left of the work. Wind the used strand around the coil once or twice close to the work to fasten the new strand. Lay the end of the used strand along the coil. Begin winding with the new strand where the used one ended. The loose ends will be covered and fastened by the new strand.

HOW TO BEGIN A RAFFIA ARTICLE

Thread a blunt tapestry needle and tie a loose knot several inches from the end of the strand. Sew over and over through the ring made by the knot. Work counter-clockwise, or toward the left. Sew once around, keeping the hole small. Cut off the loose end after it has been worked in to fasten it securely. Moisten the end of a coil of raffia, a long split reed, or a No. 3

round reed sharpened on the end. Hold the coil in the left hand. Place it over the small center or "button" so that the end points toward the right. The flat side of a split reed coil should be turned downward. Continue sewing over the coil and through the hole once around. Now any desired and suitable stitch may be begun. Hold the work so that it proceeds counter-clockwise and turn it toward the right to make room for each new stitch.

STITCHES

The following are some raffia stitches, one or more of which may be used to weave an article. The more simple stitches are: Lazy Squaw, Knot, Figure Eight, and Whip Stitch. The more complicated stitches include: Winding, Block, Soft Coil, and the Buttonhole Stitch.

The Lazy Squaw stitch is usually used for the first few rows around the center because it is close and firm. It may be used to complete the article, or other stitches may be introduced.

Lazy Squaw Stitch. — After the center is completed and the coil securely fastened, begin the first row of weaving. With the right hand bring the raffia from underneath the work up through the hole in the center and over the coil. Wind the raffia once and a half around the coil, winding away from the worker. Bring the needle up through the hole ready to form the next stitch. Repeat the above until the first row of coil has been joined and the hole is practically closed. To form additional rows the needle is passed through the holes between the stitches of each preceding row (see Fig. 11).

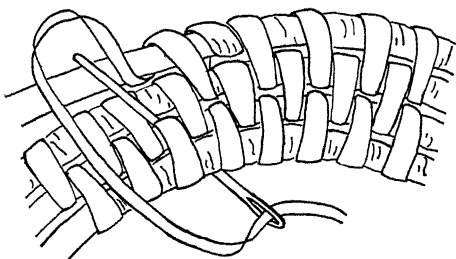


Fig. 11.—Detail of the lazy squaw stitch.

Winding Stitch. — Wind the coil four or five times or for a distance of $\frac{1}{4}$ inch, and pass the needle up through a hole in the preceding row. Carry the raffia over the top of the coil and repeat the above to form the next stitch. The Winding Stitch may be continued as described for four or five rows without the spaces between stitches becoming too wide. Then a new design is started (see General Directions for Weaving, page 20).

Figure Eight. — Wind the coil once, winding away from the worker. Bring the needle up between the coil and the preceding row. Wrap the preceding row once. Bring the needle up between the coil and the last row ready to repeat the stitch.

Soft Coil Stitch. — Use a raffia coil for this stitch. Thread a wide sewing strand into a crewel or carpet needle. Insert the needle through the center of the preceding row of work. Pass the strand over the free coil and wrap it, winding from the worker. Place the stitches about $\frac{1}{4}$ inch apart and place each stitch at the right of the one in the previous row.

Knot Stitch. — Wrap the coil two or three times, winding away from the worker. Carry the sewing strand down behind the coil and the previous row. Draw it up to the right side and pass it over the previous row and around the coil. Hold the work in place with the left thumb while the strand is passed over and down at the right of the binding stitch just formed. Bring the strand of raffia up under the coil to the left of the work and repeat the stitch (see Fig. 12).

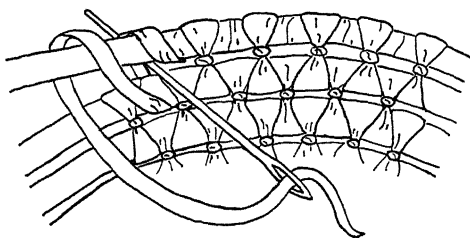


Fig. 12.—Detail of the knot stitch.

Buttonhole Stitch. — A No. 2 or 3 round reed makes the most suitable coil for this stitch. Loop the sewing strand up behind the coil and pass the needle up between the coil and the previous row, then through the loop. Draw up the thread so that the loop rests a little to the front of the top of the coil. Pass the needle over the previous row and through to the under side and form the loop for the next stitch.

Whip Stitch. — Split each strand of raffia quite fine and keep it of uniform width throughout the article. A coil of either raffia or reed may be used with this stitch. The stitch is made like the Overcasting Stitch in garment construction. Pass the sewing strand over and under the coil and the preceding row so that the stitches slant from one to the other. Place each stitch to the right of those in the previous row, and as the basket increases in size and the stitches become far apart place an extra stitch between the regular ones.

BRAIDED RAFFIA MATS

A six-strand braid makes attractive small mats. Bind together the wide ends of six strands of raffia and tie them to a hook. Cut the strands uneven in length so that they need not be spliced at the same place.

To braid the raffia pass the left hand strand over and under each of the others so that it becomes the right hand strand of the group. Repeat as each strand becomes the left hand strand of the group. To join a new strand of raffia, place it beside the short end and continue to braid. When securely fastened, cut off the loose ends. Shape the braid into an oval or round form (see Oval Mat of Braided Corn Husks, p. 16). Sew the braids together with overhanding stitches.

GENERAL DIRECTIONS FOR WEAVING WITH RAFFIA

Use raffia of uniform width and corresponding to the size of the coil. Keep the raffia untwisted and cover the coil by overlapping the raffia as it is wound around the coil. Remove all frayed and loose ends.

Make all stitches, except the Whip Stitch, perpendicular to the center, close together, and an even distance apart.

Usually stitches are taken about $\frac{1}{4}$ inch apart in the beginning. As the work increases in size and the stitches become far apart or tend to slant, two

stitches may be taken in the same hole or the raffia may be wrapped around the coil an extra time.

Care should be taken not to split the stitches on either side.

DESIGN AND COLOR

For baskets made of only one color, interesting designs may be worked out by carefully planning the kinds of stitches to be used and where to place them in relation to previous stitches (see small mat in Fig. 13). Diagonal lines of stitches may be made to form geometrical shapes such as stars, diamonds, or conventional flowers. If the stitches become too far apart to be firm, a small design may be introduced within the original design to break up the space. Place designs accurately by measuring rather than by counting rows of work or number of stitches.

Detached designs may be made with colored raffia (see Fig. 13). A colored strand is joined to the work and ended in the same manner as natural colored raffia. After using a colored strand it may be carried along with the coil until it is needed again. Then it is threaded into the needle and the strand just used is wrapped together with the coil until needed again. Select soft, delicate, rich colors rather than bright ones.

HOW TO FORM SIDES OF BASKET

The sides of a raffia basket are formed by slightly raising the coil above the preceding row as it is wrapped. Begin forming sides directly in line with the place where the coil was joined to the center. The curve should be so gradual that it can scarcely be noticed until several rows are added. It is difficult to keep the form the same throughout, but it may be gently pressed into shape when the basket is completed.

EDGE FINISHES

A raffia mat or basket may be finished with the same stitch as was used throughout the piece of work, or a new stitch may be introduced. The Lazy Squaw, Knot, and Winding Stitches make attractive edge finishes, either in natural or colored raffia. The last row should end directly over the point where the coil was joined to the center or where the sides began to turn up. Shave the end of the reed coil for a distance of 2 inches or cut a raffia coil on a slant. Complete the row of stitches. Fasten the sewing strand securely and cut it off close to the work.

HANDLES

Curved Side Handle. — When half way around the last row, moisten the reed and take three Knot Stitches close together. Wind the reed coil for the distance necessary to make a curved handle, and form it into an outward curve. Fasten coil to previous row with three Knot Stitches. Continue weaving until the opposite side of basket is reached and make another handle.

Twisted Side Handles. — Add another row to a basket with curved side handles. At the points where the handles were started in the previous row, wind the coil and twist it several times around the handles. Complete the row of stitches and fasten the thread securely.

ARTICLES TO MAKE OF RAFFIA

Mat with Lazy Squaw and Winding Stitch

Material — 1 long strand No. 3 round reed.

Approximately 8 strands natural or colored raffia.

Method — This mat is similar to the small mat in Fig. 13. Use a sewing strand about $\frac{1}{4}$ inch in width.

Make a center or button and attach the reed coil. Sew the coil once around the center with the Lazy Squaw Stitch. Continue this stitch for four more rows. Then make four or five rows of Winding Stitch, placing each new stitch to the left of the one in the previous row. With the next row finish this spiral design by placing a stitch on each side of the ones in the previous row. In the following row take a stitch between the two in the previous row.

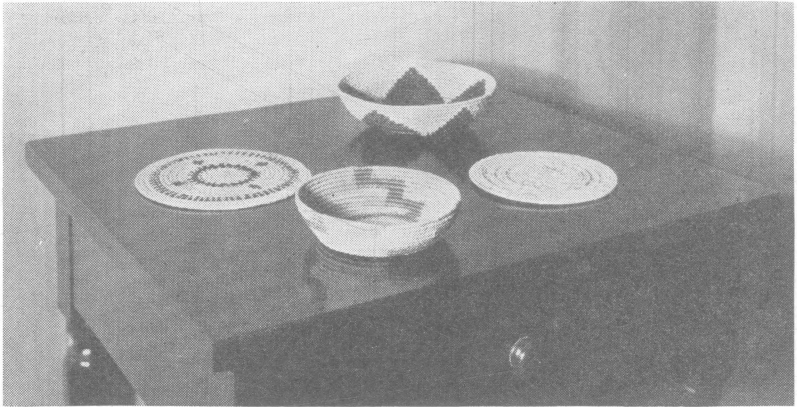


Fig. 13.—Raffia baskets and mats.

Now begin a diamond or star design by placing the stitches in the next row half way between those of the last row. In the following rows place every second stitch at the left of those in the previous row. Place the other stitches at the right of the stitches in the previous row. The design ends with a single stitch at the point of the diamond. In the last row of the diamond design take an extra stitch half way between those which complete the diamond design. This row may complete the mat, or a new design may be started at this point and a larger mat made.

Mat Made with Knot Stitch

Material — 1 strand No. 3 round reed.

8 strands natural colored raffia.

5 strands colored raffia.

Method — Use a sewing strand about $\frac{5}{16}$ inch in width. Make a center and attach the reed coil. Using natural colored raffia, weave three rows with

the Lazy Squaw Stitch. The remainder of the mat is made with the Knot Stitch. Weave three rows with natural colored raffia. Add two rows with colored raffia, then weave two rows with natural colored raffia.

Divide the circumference into fourths. Place a colored stitch at each of these division marks in the next row of weaving. In the following row place a colored stitch on each side of each of the four colored stitches in the previous row. In the next row place a colored stitch between each two colored stitches in the former row. Weave two rows with natural raffia and one row with colored raffia. Complete the mat with three rows of natural colored raffia. This makes a mat about $5\frac{1}{2}$ inches in diameter. This mat is the larger of the two mats shown in Fig. 13.

Shallow Dish with Figure Eight Stitch and Colored Line Design

Material — 1 long strand No. 3 round reed.
8 strands natural colored raffia.
4 strands colored raffia.

Method — Use a sewing strand $\frac{1}{4}$ inch in width. Make a center and attach the reed coil. Begin weaving with the Figure Eight Stitch. When the base is $2\frac{1}{2}$ inches in diameter, attach a strand of colored raffia and weave two rows. (It is necessary to weave two rows in order to have one row of color.) Begin turning up the sides gradually.

Divide the circumference of the base into thirds to indicate where to introduce color. In the following three rows add $\frac{1}{2}$ inch of color at each division mark. In the next two rows continue the use of colored raffia for a distance of 1 inch beyond each line of color previously formed. Repeat the colored line design, placing the $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch line of color at the end and directly above the $1\frac{1}{2}$ -inch line of color.

Finish with three rows of weaving, placing a $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch line of color directly above each of the $1\frac{1}{2}$ -inch lines (see the smaller of the two baskets in Fig. 13).

Bowl Made with the Knot Stitch and Colored Star Design Center

Material — 2 long strands No. 3 round reed.
6 strands natural colored raffia.
14 strands colored raffia.

Method — Use a sewing strand $\frac{5}{16}$ inch in width throughout the basket. Make a center of colored raffia and attach the reed coil. Begin weaving with the Knot Stitch and continue until the base measures $3\frac{1}{2}$ inches in diameter. Turn up the sides gradually while adding four rows of weaving. Measure the circumference of the top and divide this number by five.

In the following row, place one stitch of natural colored raffia at each of the five division points. In the next row place a stitch of natural colored raffia on each side of those in the previous row. In like manner add one additional stitch of natural color in each succeeding row. Thus the colored raffia forms five points near the top of the basket. Add two rows of natural colored raffia after the star design is completed. This makes a basket about 6 inches in diameter at the top. This is the larger of the two baskets in Fig. 13.

Small Basket and Cover Made with Lazy Squaw Stitch

Material — $2\frac{1}{4}$ strands No. 3 round reed.
16 strands natural colored raffia.
5 strands colored raffia.

Method — Use a sewing strand about $\frac{3}{16}$ inch in width throughout the basket. Make a center and attach a reed coil. Begin the Lazy Squaw Stitch. When the base measures 4 inches in diameter begin weaving the sides, forming an outward curve. At the widest part of the curve the basket should measure 5 inches in diameter. Continue weaving the sides until they measure $1\frac{1}{4}$ inches in height. Measure the circumference of the top and divide the number by eight. In the next row introduce one stitch of colored raffia at each of the division marks. In the following row place a colored stitch on each side of each of the eight colored stitches in the former row. In the third row make three colored stitches in each of the eight groups of color. Continue in this manner, making one more colored stitch in each group of color with each succeeding row.

The design is completed when only one natural colored stitch appears between each group of color. Add one row of colored raffia around the top. Cut off the coil and fasten the end securely. Make the cover the same as the base, curving it upward slightly. Fasten the cover to the basket with raffia. On the opposite side place a button and loop. This is the small basket shown on the desk in Fig. 1.

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